

**Virginia Latino Advisory Board**  
**Thursday, May 21, 2020**  
**Virtual Meeting via Webex**

In attendance: Paul Berry (Chair), Karina Kline-Gabel (Vice Chair), C. Alexander Guzmán (Secretary), J. Michael Martinez de Andino, Cecilia Barbosa, Aida Pacheco, Gloria Maria Peña Rockhold, Vivian Sanchez-Jones, Cecilia Williams, Sergio Rimola, Juan Espinoza, Eugene Chigna, Carmen Romero, Damien Cabezas, Melody Gonzales, Jorge Yinat, Manuel Leiva, Diana Brown, Rodrigo Velasquez, Walewska Watkins

Not in attendance: Edgar Aranda

Staff & Counsel: Hon. Ralph Northam, Kelly Thomasson, Dr. Janice Underwood, Dr. Megan Healy, Atif Qarni, Brian Ball, Traci DeShazor, Maribel Castañeda, Danielle Campbell, Justin Bell, Marvin Figueroa, Catie Finley, Chidi Uche,

Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth provided matters of housekeeping pertaining to requirements for holding virtual meetings.

**Call to Order 9:36 AM**

Paul Berry called the meeting to order.

**Motion:** Mike Martinez motioned to adopt the February minutes. Juan Espinoza seconded. All members present were in favor, with no one against and no abstentions.

**Motion:** Paul Berry asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Cecilia Barbosa motioned to approve the meeting agenda. J. Michael Martinez de Andino seconded. All members present were in favor, with no one against and no abstentions.

**Board Counsel Updates**

Justin Bell from the Office of the Attorney General provided new updates, guidelines and requirements on public comment and meetings in compliance with the budget amendments under the Commonwealth's State of Emergency. These updates outlined how the board meeting would proceed and comply with standards set for virtual meetings of VLAB.

**Public Comment**

Luis Oyola with the Legal Aid Justice Center introduced himself and spoke about health concerns at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention centers in Farmville and Caroline County. LAJC has formally requested the Governor order inspections of ICE centers in the Commonwealth. The LAJC's official position is that the Governor has jurisdiction to order such inspections. Mr. Oyola is requesting a recommendation from the Board to the Governor

for immediate action in this respect. The Chair asked Mr. Oyola to share the letter that LAJC sent to the Governor and any supporting documents to Danielle Campbell for dissemination to the entire board.

### **Chair's Report**

Paul Berry began the Chair's Report by stating that COVID-19 is the biggest public health crisis Latinos have faced in the Commonwealth. Since the last meeting has been maintaining regular communication with Board members in their communities and the Governor's administration. Paul has been appointed to the Governor's Health Equity Work Group and Secretary Qarni's Education Recovery Work Group, both of which are involved in efforts by the administration to address the needs of Virginia's Latino communities. Since the last meeting, Paul has submitted three letters to the Governor's Office on behalf of the Board—one addressing healthcare worker shortages, another requesting increased support for DREAMers in healthcare fields, and a third to help low income immigrants affected by COVID-19.

### **Administration Updates**

Danielle Campbell provided updates regarding the VLAB website, highlighting new sections designed to feature more Spanish content and a Community Resources Page. Changes are constantly being made to provide updates on the pandemic accessible in Spanish.

Maribel Castañeda provided an update on the Administration's Latino outreach efforts. She continues to grow the Latino email distribution list and discussed the Governor's Latinx Stakeholder call. A topic of that Stakeholder call and other engagements she makes as Director of Latino Outreach is encouraging Latinx community members to apply for Board appointments. Maribel acknowledged Vice Chair Karina Kline-Gabel for her efforts in translating official documents and resources in the early stages of the pandemic.

Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth Traci DeShazor provided updates on the Commonwealth's response to COVID-19. In a detailed presentation she clarified the organization of the Unified Command for States of Emergency and the role of the Advisory Boards within that organization. She continued by sharing data and analysis of COVID-19 testing efforts in the Commonwealth, including testing sites and pilot initiatives. She provided a data snapshot from May 20, 2020 and highlighted support services across the Commonwealth that provide Commonwealth residents with advice and support in auxiliary domains such as housing, employment, and education.

Next, Dr. Janice Underwood addressed the Board on diversity and inclusion efforts during the crisis. She spoke about her duties in the Unified Command and Health Equity Taskforce Working group that reports directly to the Governor. She stated this model was launched preemptively before the data was available on the virus's impacts on people of color in anticipation of the support vulnerable communities would need, and is consistent with national standards of Emergency Management. She finished by sharing her perspectives about local pilot initiatives to conduct testing around the state.

At this point during the meeting Governor Northam joined the Board to discuss ongoing efforts to combat the pandemic. He stated his awareness of the impacts of COVID-19 on the Latino Community and is working to mitigate those outsized effects using a whole of government approach. The Governor next spoke about specific measures the Commonwealth has taken to minimize the spread of the virus such as expanding the Virginia Medical Reserve Corps. He finished his remarks with an emphasis on the economic and budgetary impacts the pandemic is having on Virginia, and stated they were waiting on a financial reforecast before going forward with certain policy priorities.

Legislative Director Marvin Figueroa provided general updates on the General Assembly session and the legislative priorities the VLAB recommended last year. He stated budgetary considerations have put some of those priorities on hold. Marvin then entertained questions from the Board.

### **Ex-officio updates**

Catie Finley, Assistant Secretary for Health and Human Resources and Chidi Uche, Advisor on Childhood Trauma spoke about the Department's COVID response. They focused on the Department's efforts to fill gaps in social services.

Atif Qarni, Secretary of Education, spoke to the Board about efforts in addressing the issues COVID-19 has presented in K-12 schools as well as public higher education institutions. He covered topics such as facilitating easier transfer of credits, considerations in reopening schools, and requests from universities for guidance about resuming classes.

Brian Ball, Secretary of Commerce and Trade, addressed the impacts of COVID-19 on business. He stated he is working with the Federal government on funding and standing up programs to provide support through the CARES act and subsequent acts of Congress. These efforts will target those businesses unable to access Federal programs, and elaborated on the Safety First approach to mitigation and easing restrictions. They are working on guidelines for all businesses with a focus on workplace safety. He reinforced the need to have capacity to test and trace to move from broader restrictions to more tailored ones.

Megan Healy, Chief Workforce Development Officer, spoke about challenges and how her secretariat examining the kinds of jobs still available, those that have receded, and the kinds of training people need as they look for work. She stated they are receiving complaints from workers regarding workplace safety and PPE (Personal Protection Equipment), and that she is focused on addressing the most recent Unemployment Commission numbers.

Kelly Thomasson, Secretary of the Commonwealth, began her remarks by stating that typical work continues, such as for the Decennial Census. She discussed the community outreach calls regarding board appointments and engagement, and reiterated that there are 800 board and advisory council positions open this year. She finished by discussing ongoing efforts on Census outreach, including Latinx media engagement.

## **Committee Reports**

Cecilia Barbosa, chair of the Health Committee, reported out on issues of concern for the committee, including disparities among the Latinx community due to COVID-19. She also spoke on building the healthcare workforce to address these disparities, increasing access to prenatal and post-partum care for undocumented women, and greater access to mental health services.

Manuel Leiva, reporting for the Business and Trade Committee, spoke on a number of issues and recommendations important to the committee. He spoke to a recommendation eliminating a requirement that counties report immigration status when individuals have encounters with law enforcement. The Committee is also recommending a childcare fund for the children of essential workers, combatting wage theft by increasing inspections, and a moratorium on fees for nonpayment of court fines.

Melody Gonzales with the Education and Workforce Development Committee highlighted their concerns, including increasing summits and listening sessions, greater access to technology for students and educators, facilitating teacher licensure for vocational education, concerns with the public charge rule, and SNAP/TANF eligibility.

Karina Kline-Gabel reported out for the Civic Engagement Committee. She stated their priorities are to ensure all Commonwealth resources are available in Spanish, that points of social services are 100% accessible in Spanish, enforcing the Voting Rights Act and removing barriers to voting access, and increasing Census responses from the Latinx Community. Karina also spoke about the Board's 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Engagement Award, which would likely focus on frontline workers.

Carmen Romero reported out for the Housing Committee. She stated a focus on eviction prevention as many renters are out of work, access to food for out-of-work renters, increasing support for homelessness through permanent supportive housing, and reestablishing desired funding levels for the Housing Trust Fund.

Deputy Secretary Traci DeShazor asked committees to share concerns and initial thoughts with the Administration ahead of finalizing the Board's policy recommendations so they can evaluate them as they are making decisions in real time. She also spoke about requesting assistance for community engagement and civic impact from the Wilder School.

Aida Pacheco recommended absentee voting instructions be translated into Spanish.

Deputy Secretary Traci DeShazor briefed the Board about its current efforts with Legal Aid Justice Center to issue an emergency inspection at the ICE facilities in Virginia.

Danielle Campbell provided logistical details regarding the annual report, including a timeline and next steps. She stated Board recommendations are to be developed between now and June, with Board review and approval in July or August, and an internal review and submission by August or September.

Paul spoke about the Standard Operating Procedures for the Annual report. He charged committee chairs with putting together a list of recommendations and sending them to the Chair within seven days of the meeting. He asked that recommendations be categorized as either legislative or administrative actions. He stated the Board will review and approve recommendations in July and August.

Paul continued speaking about the standard operating procedures, consolidating best practices for the Board, creating mechanisms for communications, and standardizing Board tools. He instructed Committees to contact Danielle if they wish to set up a meeting.

### **Miscellaneous Board Business**

#### *Ad hoc governance committee*

Cecilia discussed her proposal from the Board's February 2020 meeting to make the *ad hoc* Governance Committee a standing committee of the Board.

**Motion:** Cecilia Barbosa made a motion to create a standing Governance Committee

**Second:** Gloria Rockhold seconded the motion.

Board members discussed the merits of codifying the Governance Committee. On the recommendation of Board Counsel Justin Bell, Paul Berry called for a motion to conduct a straw poll for the creation of an Ad Hoc Governance Committee.

**Motion:** J. Michael Martinez de Andino motioned to conduct a straw poll of Board members in support of creating a standing Governance Committee.

**Second:** Karina Kline-Gabel seconded the motion.

#### **Roll Call Vote:**

*In favor:* J. Michael Martinez de Andino, Cecilia Barbosa, Aida Pacheco, Gloria Maria Peña Rockhold, Vivian Sanchez-Jones, Cecilia Williams, Sergio Rimola, Carmen Romero, Karina Kline-Gabel, Melody Gonzales, Paul Berry, C. Alexander Guzmán, Diana Brown, Rodrigo Velasquez, Walewska Watkins

*Opposed:* Manual Leiva

**Motion passes** 15 in favor, 1 opposed

With this straw poll complete, Paul Berry asked for a new motion, replacing the first motion on the same topic, to create an Ad Hoc Governance Committee.

**Motion:** Cecilia Barbosa motioned to create a standing Governance Committee

**Second:** Aida Pacheco Seconds

**Roll call vote:**

*In favor:* J. Michael Martinez de Andino, Cecilia Barbosa, Aida Pacheco, Gloria Maria Peña Rockhold, Vivian Sanchez-Jones, Cecilia Williams, Sergio Rimola, Carmen Romero, Karina Kline-Gabel, Melody Gonzales, Paul Berry, C. Alexander Guzmán, Diana Brown, Rodrigo Velasquez

*Opposed:* Manual Leiva

*Abstain:* Walewska Watkins

**Motion passes** 14 in favor, one opposed, one abstaining

In the final portion of the meeting to discuss miscellaneous business, the Board discussed members' individual community engagement efforts during the crisis. Paul Berry asked Diana Brown to provide updates from the Education Recovery Workgroup organized by Secretary Qarni, where she is the VLAB representative. She shared some brief thoughts before Paul Berry called for a motion to adjourn.

**Motion:** J. Michael Martinez de Andino motions to end the meeting.

**Second:** Aida Pacheco seconds

**Roll call vote**

*In favor:* J. Michael Martinez de Andino, Cecilia Barbosa, Aida Pacheco, Gloria Maria Peña Rockhold, Vivian Sanchez-Jones, Cecilia Williams, Sergio Rimola, Carmen Romero, Karina Kline-Gabel, Melody Gonzales, Paul Berry, C. Alexander Guzmán, Manual Leiva, Diana Brown, Rodrigo Velasquez, Walewska Watkins

**Meeting adjourns**